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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to review new trends in teaching grammar at the secondary school level. With new developments in the fields of linguistics and psychology which resulted in the shift from structurally-dominated English-as-a-foreign-language methodology to a more communicatively-oriented one, new ideas have prevailed in language teaching in general and grammar instruction in particular. As a result, there has been a gathering momentum for a communicatively-based approach to grammar instruction that is more meaning-focused than rules-focused and is more learner-centered than subject-oriented. According to this approach, the need for introducing a certain grammatical rule arises in the first place because of the need of the learner to communicate. In this way, grammar instruction has also become more content-based, meaningful, and contextualized. Examples of this new approach to teaching grammar are provided in looking at Egyptian secondary schools in particular. Six trends that have emerged in the teaching of grammar at the secondary level are discussed in detail. Scholarly references appear throughout the text, though not in complete bibliographical form--that is author last name and year published only. (KFT)

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NEW TRENDS IN TEACHING GRAMMAR IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL: A Review Article

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March 2001

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ABSTRACT:

NEW TRENDS IN TEACHING GRAMMAR IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL:

A Review Article

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The purpose of this article was to review the new trends in teaching grammar at the secondary school level. Looking few decades back, it could be seen that grammar was taught in a traditional way. Traditional grammar teaching was more concerned with teaching the rules and was focused on long elaborate didactic explanations of the intricacies of grammar. Grammar instruction at the time was carried for its own sake, totally divorced from activities that involve it as a resource to convey meaning.

With the advent of new developments in the fields of linguistics and psychology which resulted in the shift from structurally-dominated English as a foreign language (EFL) methodology to a more communicatively-oriented one, new ideas have prevailed the field of language teaching in general and grammar instruction in particular. Stephen Krashen and colleagues launched a severe criticism against explicit grammar instruction in the second language (L2) classroom claiming that the 'comprehensible input' presented in the L2 class will help learners unconsciously internalize the grammatical system of the language the same way first language learners do. Recently, many scholars such as Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman have reacted against Krashen and others in support of explicit grammar instruction in the language classroom.

As a result, there has been gathering momentum an explicit communicatively based approach to grammar instruction that is more meaning-focused rather than rules-focused and that is more learner-centered than subject-centered. According to this approach, the need for introducing a certain grammatical rule arises in the first place from the particular needs of the learner and from a meaningful context encountering students in a meaningful learning situation. Communication became the main goal of language instruction, and the language syllabus was not organized any longer around grammar. This does not mean that grammar does not have any place in the communicative language class. Rather what

it means is that grammar instruction became more content-based, meaningful and contextualized.

In the Egyptian secondary school context, the currently adopted EFL textbook Hello! Series has communication as its main target. Written by Don Dallas and associates, this series introduces grammar explicitly in a meaningful context-based manner. However, the deductive approach to grammar instruction is mostly adhered to in the presentation procedure of the grammatical rules in the Hello! Series. It is suggested that a blend of deductive and inductive approaches be used in the presentation of the grammatical rules especially at the final years of the secondary stage. The inductive approach to grammar instruction, though more demanding on the part of students when compared with the deductive approach, is more interactive and makes the EFL class less teacher-dominated and more learner-centered.

To conclude, several trends have emerged in the area of teaching grammar in the secondary school:1) traditional grammar teaching has given way to communicative grammar instruction which considers grammar (or linguistic competence) to be one major component of communicative competence, 2) meaningful text-based explicit (rather than implicit) grammar instruction dominates the secondary EFL classes, 3) an intermarriage between explicit grammar instruction and communicative language teaching is a new trend in the EFL classroom, 4) integrating grammar instruction into the different components of the language class (such as: composition writing, teaching literature, reading, dictation, dialogues, etc.) is another new trend, 5) a blend of deductive and inductive grammar instruction has emerged for its possible effect on increasing interaction inside the EFL class, and finally 6) more learner-centered approaches to grammar instruction attempting to integrate the specific linguistic needs of the learner into the grammar component of the language class (i.e. the kind of grammar used in the writing class to be based on students' own major recurrent errors) are more in use nowadays.

INTRODUCTION:

Although teaching grammar is as old as teaching languages, it still occupies the attention of researchers in the field until very recently (e.g., Burgess, Turvey, and Quarshie, 2000; Turvey, 2000; Ellis, 1999; Schuster, 1999; Krashen, 1998; Lally, 1998; Nunan, 1998; Larsen-Freeman, 1997; Kane, 1997; Mohammed, 1997; Weatherford, 1997; Burkhalter, 1996; Ellis, 1995; Fitch, 1995; DeKeyser, 1994; Fotos, 1994; Hood, 1994; Heafford, 1993). Before delving into the body of this article, it might be appropriate to ask the question, "What do we mean by grammar?"

Several researchers have attempted to define 'grammar'. Ur (1996), for example, defines it as "*a set of rules that define how words (or parts of words) are combined or changed to form acceptable units of meaning within a language*" (p. 87). According to Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992), grammar is a description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language. It usually takes into account the meanings and functions these sentences have in the overall system of the language. Bowen, Madsen, and Hilferty (1985) put forward a simpler definition of grammar as being "*the rules by which we put together meaningful words and parts of words of a language to communicate messages that are comprehensible*" (p. 161). It can be seen from the above-cited definitions that grammar is the underlying system of any language which holds it together, and that meaning is an important part of this system.

Many scholars in the field of language teaching and learning emphasize the role grammar plays in language learning. Wilga Rivers, for example, emphasizes that grammar is the framework within which the language is operating. She goes on to explain that language without grammar "*is like saying that you can have a chicken walking around*

without bones" (Arnold, 1991, p. 3). She is against teaching grammar through giving didactic explanations of grammatical rules. Instead, teaching grammar as Rivers sees it should be done through providing activities that enable people to perform rules so that they are actually becoming familiar with the structures and accumulating a performance memory and integrating the material into their semantic networks. Celce-Murcia (1988) also believes that grammar teaching should be meaning-focused rather than rules-focused. She further explains that 'meaning-focused grammar' is contextualized and is text-based presented in a meaningful context beyond just a sentence. Savignon (1991), one of the leading advocates of communicative language teaching, emphasizes that communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar. However, Celce-Murcia (1991) stresses that grammar is a tool or resource to be used in the comprehension and creation of oral and written discourse rather than something to be learned as an end in itself. When learned as a decontextualized sentence-level system, she adds, grammar is not very useful to learners as they listen, read, speak, and write in their second or foreign language.

It can be noticed that there is an added emphasis by these scholars on presenting grammar within a meaningful context. This continued stress on contextualizing grammar resulted from certain historical developments in the fields of linguistics and psychology which took place in the past half century.

Historical Developments in Linguistics and Psychology:

Actually, understanding the role of grammar in language teaching has been influenced by recent developments in the fields of linguistics and psychology. H. Douglas Brown (1994) reviews the major changes that happened in the fields of linguistics and psychology and terms them as

revolutions in thinking which are important for the second/foreign language teacher to understand. In the field of linguistics, the structural school with its emphasis on the description of the observed verbal behavior, surface structure, performance, etc. gave way to the generative – transformation school of linguistics with its emphasis on deep structure, explanation, competence, etc.

Similarly, in the field of psychology, the school of behaviorism which emphasized stimulus-response, repetition and reinforcement was seriously challenged by cognitive psychology which considered meaning, understanding, and knowing to be significant data for psychological study. Brown (1994) goes on to add: "*Instead of focusing rather mechanistically on stimulus-response connections, cognitivists try to discover psychological principles of organization and functioning ...* (and) *by using a rationalistic approach instead of a strictly empirical approach, (they) have sought to discover underlying motivations and deeper structures of human behavior*" (p. 11).

This major shift in linguistic and psychological thinking had its influence on the place of grammar in the language class. As a result, long elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar and the focus on the form and inflection of the words are no longer considered necessary for learning languages. Instead, grammatical competence is viewed nowadays as one of four components of communicative competence; the other three are: sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

Due to the important place grammar used to play in the language class, Richard-Amato (1996) has categorized the grammar-translation method, audiolingualism, direct method, and cognitive-code approach under the generative name "grammar-based approaches." Other approaches

that appeared later such as the notional-functional and the communicative approach will not fall under this category. The following section will explore the role grammar plays in some of these teaching approaches.

The Place of Grammar in the Major Teaching Approaches:

A wide variety of approaches have resulted from the increased attention given to foreign language teaching in the United States since World War II . These approaches have differed regarding whether formal/explicit grammar instruction plays a role in the second or foreign language classroom. These approaches which were extensively reviewed by Richards & Rodgers (1986) and Celce-Murcia (1991) are the 1) audio-lingual approach, 2) cognitive-code approach, 3) comprehension approach, and 4) communicative approach.

Evolving from the work of both structural linguists and behavioral psychologists, the audio-lingual approach proposes that language performance consists of a set of habits in the use of language structures and patterns. Grammatical structures are very carefully sequenced from basic to more complex. Students are not necessarily expected to understand grammar and grammatical rules. Language is habit formation and pattern learning; it is seen as conditioning, brought about through repetition, shaping and reinforcement. Thus, mimicry of forms and memorization of certain sentence patterns are used extensively to present rules inductively. A variety of drill types is practiced with the aim of minimizing learners' errors, which are viewed as the result of interference from the first language and demand correction. The focus of instruction rarely moves beyond the sentence level (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

The cognitive-code approach which received a considerable interest in the early seventies refers to any conscious attempt to organize materials

around a grammatical syllabus while allowing for meaningful practice and use of language (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Language learning is viewed as hypothesis formation and rule acquisition, rather than habit formation. Grammar is considered important, and rules are presented either deductively or inductively depending on the preferences of learners. Class exercises are intended to give learners ample practice with rule application. Errors are viewed as the inevitable by-products of language learning. Error analysis and correction can be seen as appropriate classroom activities from which both teachers and students can learn. The focus is still largely sentence-oriented (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

The comprehension approach, which emerged during the seventies and eighties, emphasizes the development of comprehension skills before the learner is taught to speak. Language learning and teaching should reflect the naturalistic processes of first language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The learner is encouraged to use meaningful non-verbal responses to demonstrate comprehension because it is primary. The process of acquiring a second or foreign language is referred to as a subconscious process by which language learners gradually organize the language they hear, according to rules they construct for generating sentences (Larsen-Freeman, 1991). Most of the grammatical structures and hundreds of vocabulary items are sequenced carefully in the instructional program and can be learned from the skillful use of the imperative by the instructor. Grammar is presented inductively (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Other proponents of this approach even propose that grammar instruction be excluded from the classroom, because a learner's mastery of the grammar would emerge if the learner is provided with comprehensible input, and that error correction is unnecessary, since errors will gradually self-correct as learners are

exposed to more complex, rich and meaningful input in the target language (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

The communicative approach, which originates in the work of American anthropological linguists and British functional linguists, views language as an instrument of communication. Thus, communication is the goal of language instruction, and the syllabus of a language course should not be organized around grammar but should be content-based, meaningful, contextualized and discourse-based (rather than sentence-based). Role-playing and problem-solving tasks are used for the acquisition of specific functions. Among the proponents of this approach, there has been some debate regarding the nature, extent and type of grammar instruction or grammar awareness activities, as well as opinions about issues such as whether, when, or how teachers should correct grammatical errors (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Resulting from this debate is the controversial issue of whether grammar should be taught explicitly or implicitly.

Grammar Instruction: The explicit-implicit controversy

Two distinctly different approaches to teaching grammar have emerged over the years. These are the explicit and implicit approaches to grammar instruction. Scott (1990) describes the explicit approach as insisting upon the value of deliberate study of a grammar rule in order to organize linguistic elements efficiently and accurately. In contrast, Scott continues, the implicit approach emphasizes that students should be exposed to grammatical structures in a meaningful and comprehensive context in order that they may acquire, as naturally as possible, the grammar of the target language.

The usefulness of teaching and learning grammar either explicitly or implicitly in an L2 situation has been an important and interesting point of

research in the field of language teaching and learning. This issue has been controversial for a number of years (Scott, 1989; 1990; Green & Hecht, 1992; Celce-Murcia, 1992; Krashen, 1992; 1993; 1998; Lightbown & Pinemann, 1993; DeKeyser, 1994, Larsen-Freeman, 1997).

Scholars who support an implicit approach to grammar instruction, on the one hand, argue that students will develop "naturally" all the grammar competency they need to communicate effectively from exposure to comprehensible, meaningful linguistic input. Indeed, Krashen and colleagues (Krashen,1982; 1985; Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982; Krashen and Terrell, 1983) led the revolution against explicit grammar instruction. Krashen's Monitor model (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) holds that learning is a conscious process whereas acquisition is highly unconscious. For Krashen (1982), subconscious acquisition of comprehensible input in a low anxiety context plays a pivotal role in developing language fluency. He sees the learning of grammar as useful only as a 'monitor' and not an utterance initiator. According to Krashen and Terrell (1983), language acquirers should not necessarily be accurate in all details of grammar, and that a grammatical syllabus should not be shaped into the activities of the class. The study of grammar to them has a peripheral role in the language program (Krashen, 1993). Its goal is to produce optimal monitor-users, performers who can use grammar as a supplement to acquisition in situations where grammar use is appropriate, i.e., when they have time, when the focus is on form, and when they know the rule. In a more recent article, Krashen (1998), still holding the same opinion about explicit grammar instruction, concludes that there is no relationship between grammar study and measures of writing ability.

Many scholars in the field of language teaching and learning have reacted against Krashen and others who support the implicit approach to

grammar instruction. They do not accept the claim that grammar is acquired naturally and that there is no need to teach it. The implicit approach , Celce-Murcia (1991) warns, "*can lead to the development of a broken, ungrammatical, pidginized form of the target language beyond which students rarely progress*" (p. 462). Such learners, she explains, are often said to have fossilized (i.e. prematurely plateaued) in their acquisition of the target language.

Some of these scholars believe that there is no experimental evidence available to validate Krashen's learning/acquisition hypothesis. As a matter of fact, Krashen's theory encounters harsh criticism from Gregg (1984) who doubts the validity of Krashen's acquisition/learning hypothesis and considers it as merely a personal observation without supporting evidence. Ellis (1990) also points out that it is difficult to see how the input hypothesis can be properly tested.

Scholars who support an explicit method of grammar instruction, on the other hand, insist on the importance of overtly teaching the rules and grammatical structures of the target language in order to organize, efficiently and accurately, linguistic elements for communicative purposes. Omaggio (1984; cited in Scott, 1989), for example, believes that students need to go through a stage of heavily structured practice of grammatical structures before they are able to move toward open-ended, creative language. Rivers in an interview with Arnold (1991) supports explicit grammar instruction as long as it provides activities that enable students to perform rules to become familiar with the structures and accumulate a performance memory and integrate the material into their semantic networks. Savignon (1991) points out that while involvement in communicative events is seen as central to language involvement, this involvement necessarily requires attention to form or explicit language

teaching. Nunan (1998) sees form, meaning, and use as three interacting dimensions of the language. Finally, Green and Hecht (1992) stress the role of formal/explicit grammar teaching and learning stating that *"it satisfies a human drive to impose order on the apparent chaos of natural language"* (p. 169).

Celce-Murcia (1992), a firm supporter of formal/explicit grammar instruction, calls on language teachers to meet the challenge of developing "*effective ways of focusing learner attention on form at critical moments while learners are using the second language for purposeful communication, especially written communication*" (p. 408). She asserts that any formal/explicit grammar instruction is more effective if it is discourse-based and context-based than if it is sentence-based and context-free. Finally, it is worth mentioning here that even Krashen acknowledges that "*grammar learning does have an effect*", although he adds that "*this effect is peripheral and fragile*" (Krashen, 1992, p. 409) and that grammar, according to Terrell (1991), can be helpful in an acquisition-based communicative approach.

Thus, it can be concluded at this point that there is a consensus among language specialists that the teaching of grammar helps language learners develop linguistic competence as part of communicative competence. Several studies undertaken in this area yielded evidence supporting this position.

Explicit Grammar Instruction: Effectiveness Studies

The usefulness of teaching and learning grammar in an L2 situation has been an important and interesting point of research in the field of language teaching and learning. A thorough search of the literature (Pinemann, 1984; Scott, 1989; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; White, 1991;

Scott and Randall, 1992; Dekeyser, 1994; El-Banna, 1994; Yim, 1998) reveals that a variety of research findings favors conscious grammar teaching/learning. Some convincing research findings are worth mentioning here.

Pinemann (1984; cited in Larsen-Freeman, 1997) demonstrated that subjects who received grammar instruction progressed to the next stage after a two-week period, a passage normally taking several months in untutored development. While the number of subjects studied was admittedly small, the finding provides evidence of the efficacy of teaching over leaving acquisition to run its natural course.

In Scott (1989), two groups of students listened to specific grammar structures presented explicitly and implicitly. She found that students who were taught the target structures explicitly performed better overall than those who had an implicit method of instruction.

Lightbown and Spada (1990) examined various communicative classrooms for incidents of teacher-initiated grammar instruction or error correction. It was determined that learners in such classrooms showed greater accuracy in subsequent use of some of the forms than learners from classrooms where there was no focus on form or error correction.

White (1991) presented formal/explicit instruction and feedback on adverb position in different communicative classrooms. Findings indicated that short-term improved accuracy in the taught grammar point resulted, compared with uninstructed control groups, although long-term gains were not evident for adverb position.

Scott and Randall (1992) analyzed the capabilities of students in a first-year college French class to read, understand and use targeted linguistic structures taken from their textbook. They concluded that

students could learn certain kinds of linguistic structures autonomously, whereas other kinds of structures require more active teacher intervention. They recommend that teachers should understand that a vital aspect of a successful proficiency-oriented program lies in how grammar rules are presented rather than in the elimination of explicit discussion of grammar rules.

Dekeyser (1994) explored the role of explicit teaching of different kinds of grammar rules. The explicit (rules are formulated) subjects were presented with the grammar rules of a linguistic system designed for this experiment. The implicit (no rules are formulated) subjects received no explanation of grammar. After the 20 learning sessions, subjects were asked to retrospect for 10 minutes about their learning experience. The results support the theory that explicit learning is better than implicit learning for categorical rules.

El-Banna (1994) investigated the effectiveness of teaching formal/explicit grammar and grammatical structures on the development of writing skills of Egyptian learners of English. Results indicated that after receiving intensive grammar instruction for 12 weeks during a composition course, the experimental group generally performed better on grammar than the control group. Significantly better writing test performance was found for experimental group subjects overall.

Finally, Yim (1998) examined the role of grammar instruction in L2 learning by investigating whether L2 learners significantly improved their language skills after formal/explicit grammar instruction and to what extent grammatical knowledge predicted a learner's next level of overall language proficiency. Results suggested that the students improved significantly after formal instruction, and that grammatical knowledge is a significant predictor of the students' readiness for the next course level.

These studies show that there is overwhelming evidence in support of the effectiveness of the explicit approach to grammar instruction. Of course, this writer tends to side with the position of explicit grammar instruction since it is particularly useful in our EFL situation in Egypt where out-of-class 'comprehensible input' is almost non-existent.

This writer believes that language learning is a conscious process during which learners always look for clues that will help them understand how the language works. They like to reason from specific concrete information presented to them in a detailed systematic reasoned manner. This view supports the need for explicitly focusing on the 'form' of the language. As a matter of fact, communication depends to a large degree on form because a serious breakdown in grammar control frequently leads to a parallel breakdown in communication.

INTEGRATING GRAMMAR INTO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM:

Several writers in the field have criticized teaching grammar separately and in isolation from the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Storti (1990) believes that grammar is best acquired by putting the learners into different meaningful activities. Celce-Murcia (1992) cautions that teaching grammar for its own sake is as irresponsible and counterproductive as not teaching grammar at all. She urges language teachers to develop effective ways of focusing learner attention on form at critical moments while learners are using the second language for purposeful communication, especially written communication. In response, there have been several attempts (Stern, 1987; Celce-Murcia, 1988; Keh, 1991; Ibrahim, 1993; Fotos, 1994; Matter, 1995, Weaver, 1996) to integrate

grammar instruction into the language curriculum in the areas of teaching literature, composition writing, reading, dictation, and dialogues. Following is a survey of some of these attempts with specific references to the Hello! Series when appropriate.

Composition Writing:

Several researchers have attempted to integrate grammar into the composition writing class. Celce-Murcia (1988), for example, suggests a holistic text-based approach to incorporating grammar into the writing class which will combine the positive aspects of the process approach with concern for grammatical accuracy of written text, i.e. of multi-sentence discourse (i.e. at least a paragraph-level piece of writing for lower proficiency students). She emphasizes that there is a need to encourage students to focus on form without detracting them from focusing on the process of writing. She goes on to illustrate that in the prewriting stage, for example, grammar can be approached holistically in that the use of specific structures can be encouraged by well-selected topics that can be thoroughly discussed before any writing is done. Keh (1991) recommends teaching grammar as a process in the process of writing. She suggests that grammar should be based on students' own common writing errors and is inductive and meaning-focused. Finally, Weaver (1996) concludes that teaching grammar in the context of writing might be much more effective than teaching grammar as a separate subject.

These ideas could be manipulated with the different composition activities (found at the end of each unit in Hello! 6) which include writing paragraphs requiring the transfer of information from tables and plans in note form, writing descriptions and letters.

Teaching Literature:

Stern (1987) suggests that when teaching literature, it may be more effective and appropriate for teachers to defer any discussion and clarification of problematic grammatical structures until the students actually encounter them within the context of the work. This is because examining these structures after encountering them is less a grammar exercise than a highly motivating way of clarifying the text. She goes on to point out that " *when there are numerous grammatical irregularities, the instructor might forewarn students. Even then, it is best to let students initially encounter the work on their own as individuals or a class to see what they can make of it and then assist them in unraveling the complexities. That way, students can strengthen their grasp of English grammar*" (p. 49). According to Stern, simplifying and restructuring the literary text, along with using paraphrasing and restatement could be useful techniques for clarifying grammatical difficulties because they help students master unfamiliar structures by analyzing them at the grammatical level and by manipulating the phrases and sentences in which they appear.

The adopted reader for first year secondary students is a collection of Short Stories (Egyptian International Publishing Company-Longman 1999). The following text is an excerpt from the first story by George Sheffield entitled: 'An Artist's Story':

"*I was delicately brought up, and it soon became clear that I was not an ordinary boy. At the age of seven I won a prize for a drawing of an animal. We will forget the fact that I had intended my drawing to represent sunset over London. After that my proud parents provided me with plenty of pencils and paper and gave me the opportunity of studying under great painters. At the age of twenty-one I started a business as a painter of people, and painted eleven pictures of my face. Nobody seemed to want*

them, and if you go into my setting room, you will see them hanging sadly on the wall, looking down at the empty chair which I will never sit in again. For I am certain that I shall never rise from this bed ..." (p. 3).

It can be noted that the dominant tense in this text is the simple past. The students' attention could be drawn to the following regular verbs in the past tense (e.g., provided, started, painted, seemed) and also to the following irregular ones (e.g., brought up, became, was, won, had, gave).

Another example from The Spiders, the Hello! 7 reader for the second year secondary shows that the focus is on the modals (will, must, can, could, etc.):

"*However, if these spiders are unknown species, scientists will have to develop a new antivenom. That will be a slow and difficult process with lots of problems. First, we must get some venom from the spiders, then we must send to an antevenom lab, where scientists produce antevenom. But then comes the difficult part: extracting the antevenom from the blood and making it safe to use. It could be years before a safe antevenom can be produced in large quantities* " (p. 32).

These grammatical points can be introduced or revised by the teacher as s/he teaches these literary texts.

Reading & Dictation:

Text-based grammar is grammar teaching using reading texts or dictated texts as a base for grammar and other activities. It is also grammar activity based on the errors of the students' written texts so that a grammar rule is seen in the context of the particular texts of the students. Lastly, it is grammar focused exercises that arise from written texts that may be created by teachers as in the case of creating dicto-gloss texts (Matter, 1995).

The dicto-gloss is a teaching procedure, suggested by Wajnryb (1989), which involves the speedy dictation of a short text to a group of language students. The students take notes during the reading of the text and then, working in small groups, proceed to piece together the text as a cooperative endeavor. This is achieved by the pooling of the group's notes and the making of grammatical decisions about the text: specifically about word choice, sentence formation, and cross-sentence connections. Finally, after each group has produced its own version of the text, the whole class reconvenes and the groups' versions are analyzed and corrected. One feature of a good dicto-gloss text is that it has a structural focus; that is, it should include an unmarked usage of at least one language point that serves as a pedagogic tool in the analysis and correction stage.

The EFL Situation in Egypt:

In Egypt, English is taught in a typical foreign language situation where it is taught in formal school settings. Most learners start learning English at the age of ten. Egyptian EFL classrooms are often crowded with students ranging in number from 40 to 70. Of course, these large classes put their constraints on the use of communicative activities inside the classroom. Egyptian EFL classes are mostly teacher-dominated and a learner-centered approach required by communicative classroom activities is not easy to implement.

The Secondary EFL English Curriculum in Egypt:

The Hello! Series which is written from a communicative approach perspective is currently adopted in the Egyptian public school system and covers seven grades; from 4th primary to 2nd secondary with Hello! 6 and 7 being used for both first and second year secondary.

Aims of Hello! at the secondary school level, are: 1) building upon the language and skills presented at previous levels, 2) encouraging the intellectual development of the students, and 3) laying the foundation for students to be independent language learners. The language skills required of the secondary students include: 1) reading the English language with understanding and critical judgement, 2) writing clearly on various topics, 3) listening and speaking well, especially in structured situations, 4) developing an understanding of the structure of the English language, and 5) promoting study skills for further study (Allen and Iggulden, 1999; 2000).

With reference to grammar instruction, Hello! 6 and 7 include a **'Learn about language'** section the activities of which attempt to develop students' awareness of grammar, helping them to analyze both form and use. Throughout the book students are also referred to the **Grammar Review** section at the end of the Student's Book (Allen and Iggulden, 1999; 2000)..

Written by Don Dallas and Helena Gomm (1999; 2000), Hello! 6 & 7 textbooks approach grammar instruction from a deductive methodology. In this approach the instructor explains a grammatical rule first and then directs the class in contextualized exercises, which practice application of the rule. This approach is deductive in the sense that the grammar lesson or part of the lesson progresses from the general (the rule) to particulars (examples in a drill). The following example is taken from Hello! 6, Unit 9 (HYGIENE), p. 42.

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Grammar: Verbs followed by to + infinitive or the gerund:

[GRAMMAR page 103]

Some verbs can take either to + infinitive or the gerund and have the same meaning.

These sentences mean the same:

He started to run.

He started running.

Remember that some verbs take the gerund:

I enjoy swimming.

And others only take to + infinitive:

He promised to come.

Read these sentences and tick all those that are grammatically possible. Use your dictionary if you are not sure.

1. a. The baby began to cry.
   b. The baby began crying.

2. a. He decided to take a taxi home.
   b. He decided taking a taxi home.

3. a. My brother avoided to meet other students after school.
   b. My brother avoided meeting other students after school.

4. a. I intend to work harder next term.
   b. I intend working harder next term.

5. a. He enjoys to play football.
   b. He enjoys playing football.

It can be seen from the above example that the deductive presentation of grammar is adhered to by the textbook writers. When compared with the inductive approach which is more demanding on the part of students (Barjesteh & Halliday, 1990), this deductive approach may be much easier to follow by both secondary school teachers and students. However, the amount of interaction the inductive approach can generate in the grammar lesson cannot be ignored. It can also contribute to making the grammar lesson more learner-centered (where students are encouraged to develop rules from authentic linguistic samples and to practice applying these rules) and not teacher-dominated. Therefore, a blend of both deductive and inductive approaches to grammar instruction is highly recommended to be used in our secondary school EFL classes..

CONCLUSIONS:

Teaching grammar for its own sake which used to dominate the language classroom before World War II can be described as harmful to language learners. This is because a knowledge of the rules gives learners only some measure of 'accuracy' which by itself can help them pass the examinations in English, but does not give them the ability to communicate meaningfully in real life. To counteract this situation, a methodology aiming at developing communicative competence that blends 'accuracy' and 'fluency' has emerged.

This communicatively based grammar instruction methodology, though form-focused, is meaning-focused and aims at integrating grammar instruction in the foreign language class. Several attempts have been made in this direction for the purpose of integrating grammar into teaching composition, literature, reading, dictation, dialogues, and reading. This

approach is text-based since it stems from the assigned texts and uses them as a base for grammar instruction.

It has been demonstrated that the deductive approach to grammar instruction dominates the EFL secondary school textbooks in Egypt. Although this approach may be easy to use for both teachers and students, it might contribute to more teacher-dominated classes. Instead, using an inductive approach would be more enriching and challenging, because it will lead to more interaction taking place inside the class. The initiative will be more in the hands of students who will be more problem-solvers and active participants. A combination of inductive and deductive approaches, this writer thinks, may be more useful to our secondary school students.

The desire to find means of making language teaching more responsive to learners' needs, and thus more 'learner-centered', has been a consistent feature of both writing and practical experimentation since the 1960s (Tudor, 1996). The active cooperation of the learner as a rational, creative individual has been advocated eversince. Going in the same direction are the learner-centered approaches to language teaching in which information by and from learners is used in planning/implementing and evaluating programs (Nunan, 1989). These kinds of approaches attempt to integrate information by and from learners into every phase of the curriculum process. Actually some attempts were made in the EFL curriculum to integrate the specific needs of the learner into grammar instruction (Mohammed, 1993; 1997). Keh (1991) recommends that the kind of grammar to be used in the writing class should be based on students' own errors. It is important to recommend here that teachers should attempt to manipulate a variety of activities while teaching grammar

in order to meet the individual needs and learning style preferences of their students.

Resulting from the controversy between the explicit vs. the implicit supporters of grammar instruction is a call to draw a balance between formal/explicit grammar instruction and communicative language teaching. Although grammar is viewed as the support system for communication, it is important that a balance be achieved between grammar study and communication. Green and Hecht (1992), for example, call for a balance between time spent teaching and learning explicit rules and time spent acquiring communicative skills. They suggest that this balance could be achieved by determining whether a rule is simple or difficult. The former (i.e. the simple rule) could be explicit and practiced; the latter (i.e. difficult rule) explained and practiced in the context of communicative skills.

Intermarriage between explicit grammar teaching and communicative language teaching will be more beneficial to our EFL situation in Egypt. This intermarriage will be realized through contextualized language practice in communication activities in which rules of use are presented in discourse contexts. In short, explicit grammar teaching remains essential especially in an EFL situation, but communicative considerations can guide what is taught.

To conclude this article, several trends have emerged in the area of teaching grammar in the secondary school: 1) traditional grammar teaching has given way to communicative grammar instruction which considers grammar (or linguistic competence) to be one major component of communicative competence, 2) meaningful text-based explicit (rather than implicit) grammar instruction dominates the secondary EFL classes, 3) an intermarriage between explicit grammar instruction and communicative language teaching is a new trend in the EFL classroom, 4) integrating

grammar instruction into the different components of the language class (such as: composition writing, teaching literature, reading, dictation, dialogues, etc.) is another new trend, 5) a blend of deductive and inductive grammar instruction has emerged for its possible effect on increasing interaction inside the EFL class, and finally 6) more learner-centered approaches to grammar instruction attempting to integrate the specific linguistic needs of the learner into the grammar component of the language class (i.e. the kind of grammar used in the writing class to be based on students' own major recurrent errors) are more in use nowadays.

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